



Citoyenneté et
Immigration Canada

Citizenship and
Immigration Canada



FOCUS

Integration • Inclusion

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For a fair and welcoming French-language community in Ontario

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www.cic.gc.ca

To respond to the articles published
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La Passerelle I.D.É. is a non-profit
organization created in response to the
integration and economic development
needs of young Francophones from the
various cultural communities of Greater
Toronto. Founded in 1993, La Passerelle
is recognized within the French-speaking
community for its leadership on issues and
matters affecting its clientele.
www.passerelleide.com

To consult calls for proposals issued by
Citizenship and Immigration Canada,
Settlement Directorate, Ontario Region,
visit www.etalblissement.org.

About... CIC's Modernized Approach

By: Darlyn Mentor,
Director, Settlement Programs

This year saw the adoption of a modernized approach by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). This new approach to settlement programs demonstrates the federal government's commitment to supporting Francophone minority communities with new programming backed by ministerial accountability. The programming is intended to achieve concrete results with a view to enhancing programs and maximizing benefits for newcomers. CIC's modernized approach is based on the department's vision, which involves a commitment to deliver, with key partners, the highest quality immigration, citizenship, and multiculturalism programs that are efficient and responsive to community needs. The modernized approach is the result of two major changes: increased program funding and a renewed vision on how settlement services can be delivered through a new set of terms and conditions. The modernized approach offers three key transformations to improve settlement outcomes: greater flexibility, results-oriented programming, and better planning and coordination.

Service provider organizations are essential partners in delivering settlement programs and meeting the needs of newcomers. The new modernized settlement program is key to achieving one of the department's main objectives, i.e., meeting the needs of communities in all regions of the country by creating the conditions to attract people who, in realizing their full potential, will also contribute to the social, economic and cultural life of Canada, and thus become full-fledged citizens.

The Settlement Program supports newcomers in a variety of ways by providing language training so they have the language skills necessary to succeed in Canada; the information they need to better understand life in Canada and make informed decisions about their settlement experience; the required assistance to find employment commensurate with their skills and education.

The Program also helps newcomers establish networks and contacts in their communities, so that they are engaged and feel welcome in Canada.

The modernized approach is a shift in the way CIC and service provider organizations address the needs of newcomers, and in the way settlement initiatives are delivered and administered. Settlement programming has moved from separate programs, i.e., the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program, the Immigrant Settlement Adaptation Program (ISAP), and Host, to one single Settlement Program. The approach is activity- and outcome-based to ensure that settlement programming is responsive and flexible to meet the clients' needs.

Under the new activity- and outcome-based approach, service provider organizations must "combine and deliver" an array of settlement services and program components (streams) in response to the clients' various needs. For example, a program that offers language courses combined with job search and mentoring workshops (which previously required individual contribution agreements because they were governed by different programs, such as ISAP, LINC or the Host Program), can now be funded as a single project under a single contribution agreement.

The modernized approach recognizes that each of the expected results can be achieved through a combination of activities from various streams. Therefore, service providers need to indicate, in a project proposal, how the project will contribute to one of the five expected results (by drawing from activities in one or more of the six streams). In many instances, services that previously required multiple contribution agreements may now be delivered through one agreement covering a range of services. This means that SPOs can spend more time and energy where they are needed most – serving clients.

Promotion and Recruitment

Destination Canada 2009 *The Ultimate Job Fair*

Destination Canada is the ultimate forum for Canadian employers looking to connect with French and Belgian job seekers. Held in November 2009 in Paris and Brussels, the event drew more than 3,275 applicants, 57 first-rate employers and 79 representatives of all Canadian provinces, in addition to the two Canadian territories. Some of the world's leading companies were in attendance, including Research in Motion, the famed manufacturer of the BlackBerry, and global transportation giant Bombardier Aeronautics. Also present was a Franco-Ontarian delegation made up of organizations and companies such as Montfort Hospital, the French Language Public School Board CSDCSO and RDÉE Ontario.

The event was made possible thanks to funding support from Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC).

Benefits for Canadian Employers

Destination Canada provides access to a large potential pool of skilled workers in a variety of fields in both France and Belgium. Employment and international mobility counsellors worked closely with employers, connecting them with the best possible candidates to meet their labour needs.

Interestingly, France has 64 million inhabitants and Belgium has 10 million, many of whom are reportedly keen on Canada and the North American work experience.

Testimonials from Participating Employers ▼

Montfort Hospital was a first-time participant. Located in the Ottawa-Gatineau region, Montfort is an essential institution to Ontario's Francophone community with a stellar reputation both as a health care facility and cultural icon. The hospital provides high quality primary and secondary levels of care to the population of Ottawa and Eastern Ontario. The university hospital complex is experiencing unprecedented growth and, once it is completed, the hospital will double in size. Our facility will then be able to offer a complete range of health care services to a greater number of patients. We will also need to hire many more health professionals.

Because of the nursing shortage in Ontario and Canada, Montfort Hospital was invited by Citizenship and Immigration Canada to join the delegation for the purpose of recruiting registered nurses abroad. Montfort's participation was welcomed by event organizers and participants from the various provinces and territories. A total of 83 job applicants, 14 of them nurses, visited the Montfort booth. Employment opportunities at Montfort are enticing on many levels: salaries are competitive, the hospital is growing, work conditions are good, the workplace places a premium on human values such as compassion and service quality, and the hospital is located in a prime region of Canada which attracts many visitors.

After the event, we followed up with interested job applicants to begin the recognition process whereby foreign credentials are assessed as per the standards and regulations established by the College of Nurses of Ontario and Montfort Hospital.

Participating in *Destination Canada* was an extraordinary opportunity to position Montfort in a competitive international market and to link up with community partners from Ontario and elsewhere. A request for collaboration with Montfort was made to the College of Nurses of Ontario, something that is already in place between the employers and the College's counterparts in Québec and Manitoba. Depending on how well the credential recognition process turns out for job applicants, future recruiting opportunities could be pursued with other Francophone countries.

Marie O'Dell
Recruitment Director
Montfort Hospital



Testimonials from Participating Employers ▶

The Destination Canada event was a new recruitment opportunity for us at COM DEV, and I attended both Paris and Brussels editions on behalf of the organization. At COM DEV, we specialize in the design and manufacturing of hardware and subsystems used in the space satellite industry. Since Destination Canada was being held in both France and Belgium, we had a strong interest in attending the event as there was a high probability of locating strong candidates from the European space industry.

From the beginning all the way until the end, this event was very well organized from all angles, including daily transportation, hotel arrangements, tours in Paris and the event set-up itself. The recruitment event was divided into two segments each day, which proved to be very manageable for one representative, yet busy enough to make my trip worthwhile. In Paris, many strong candidates visited the COM DEV booth, and in particular a handful with direct experience

in the space industry. And at the Brussels event, I met strong technical candidates, although their connection to the space industry was not as strong as that of the Paris candidates.

One aspect that greatly impressed me was how far candidates were willing to travel in order to attend both the Paris and Brussels events. I met candidates who had travelled from as far as Switzerland, Germany, the Netherlands, as well as the south of France. This showed me just how serious they were about coming to work in Canada. Since the event, we have followed up with several candidates. Thus far, we have done a number of follow-up interviews, and discussions are ongoing regarding our next steps with key candidates.

Overall, Destination Canada proved to be an excellent opportunity to meet colleagues from other organizations across Canada, to visit two new countries as well as meet

strong candidates passionate about applying their skills in Canada. As a Human Resources team, we attend multiple recruitment events each year, but I found this event to be very different. Destination Canada was very consistent, with strong technical candidates in attendance each day. For COM DEV, meeting candidates from the European space industry is an excellent opportunity for our team to recruit more knowledge and experience in space satellite technology.

This is an event that we would like to consider attending consistently each year. As for myself, I enjoyed the entire experience, and I look forward to taking part again!

Todd Neath, CHRP
Human Resources Associate
COM DEV Ltd.

Our school board was fortunate to be able to participate in this international event with the aim of filling positions in two specialty fields that have posed a serious recruiting challenge in the past several years, i.e. psychometricians and speech therapists.

Our journey began with a wonderful reception on Sunday evening. The next day, we took in all of the presentations at the Canadian embassy in Paris and at Pôle Emploi International, which was great because they framed our discussions with the various job applicants we met over the next few days.

We spent three days in Paris and one full day recruiting in Brussels. We had the pleasure of speaking with more than 150 candidates interested in Ontario, specifically in the field of education. Our discussions with the other provinces were just as beneficial. Staff at the Canadian embassy and Pôle Emploi

were very supportive and welcoming. We truly appreciated the hard work of the entire team.

Upon our return, we reviewed résumés. We set up formal interviews, specifically for the psychometrics positions. We are confident that we will be able to make two job offers in that field. The speech therapy positions remain vacant.

In addition, close to a dozen people with resident permits showed interest in moving to the Central South Western region of Ontario. We advised them to contact us upon their arrival, at which point we can consider the possibility of hiring them for positions matching their skills, most likely as instructors of persons with disabilities, or as non-certified instructors, until their credentials can be properly assessed by the Ontario College of Teachers.

In short, several lives may take an interesting turn thanks to this initiative. The French Language Public School Board is thrilled to have had the opportunity to meet with applicants who have the potential of further enriching the diversity of our schools. Demand for personnel in our region remains high, since our student population continues to evolve and grows ever more diverse with the nonstop arrival of newcomers.

Gyslaine Hunter-Perreault
Associate Director
CSDCSO



Access to French-language College Studies: The Added Value of Opening the Doors to Diversity

For La Cité collégiale, the added value of throwing its doors open to diversity is beyond question. Efforts to facilitate access to French-language college studies and improve student retention through to graduation are yielding good results, particularly for Ontario Francophone students, and specifically French-speaking students from racial and ethnocultural minorities. The ongoing diversification of the student body is proof of this.

«In addition to enriching college life, students from various ethnocultural communities are now free to access a range of training opportunities, which will equip them with the knowledge and know-how they need to contribute fully to their workplace and the community.»

Excerpt, 2008-2009 Annual Report
La Cité collégiale

In 2010 and beyond, La Cité collégiale will step up efforts to promote greater access through various measures including agreement renewals and the launch of new training programs.



A Strong Push to Promote the Hiring of Skilled Immigrants

On April 1, 2009, La Cité collégiale received funding to implement *Arrimage Emploi*, a job/skills matching program. Funding, to be spread over three years, was provided by the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI) and Citizenship and Immigration Canada. The program is expected to boost job placement rates among skilled immigrants who successfully complete their training program at La Cité collégiale. The idea is to help professionals with foreign credentials to find a job that matches their level of education and experience. Participants attend workshops to learn about Canadian corporate culture, employer expectations and job search strategies. The program also offers paid and unpaid internships, job search assistance, on-the-job training and follow-up assistance after placement.

PRATICal Training for French-speaking Professionals with Foreign Credentials

Starting in January 2010, thanks to an MCI grant, La Cité collégiale will undertake to develop and implement a unique customized training and assessment method called *PRATIC*. As the name suggests, *PRATIC* is designed to facilitate access to information and communication technologies (ICT) for professionals educated abroad through the taking of a college program, professional certification process, or both.

The objective is to help skilled immigrants to successfully integrate the Canadian labour market, in the field of ICT, and find a position that matches their skills, their level of experience, and meets with their expectations. In its first year, the program will work toward a systemic change in the way immigrants' credentials are assessed. Equivalency tests will also be developed to determine which courses can be credited and which must be retaken. In addition, courses dealing with the Canadian labour market will be developed to help immigrants better understand the Canadian workplace. Participants will be required to complete an internship with an employer; they will also have mentors to help them with the job search. This program is in response to the shortage of bilingual workers in the field of ICT. The program, which acts as a gateway to ICT professions, is specifically designed to address the realities of the labour market in the Nation's Capital.

Communication by, for and with Immigrant Clients

Thanks to funding from Citizenship and Immigration Canada, La Cité des Affaires is launching an innovative skills development project called *Conjuguer l'établissement*. The project is intended for teachers and those who work closely with immigrant clients. The goal is to create a user-friendly platform that will help teachers to better understand and support immigrant students. It will enable users to view, index, design and dispense training in the fields of intercultural communication, practical communication (adapting language to the communication context), communication in the workplace and behavioural communication.

Sources: Nicole Olivier, Manager, Newcomer Programs, La Cité des Affaires, La Cité collégiale
Pierre Louis Valin, B.A., Manager, Business Development, La Cité des Affaires, La Cité collégiale
La Cité collégiale 2008-2009 Annual Report

Francophone Communities

Visible Minorities and Homelessness: A Top Priority

A Closer Look at Ottawa



- ▶ New immigrants represent the fastest growing segment of the city's population.
- ▶ Between 1986 and 2001, the immigrant population increased at a faster pace in Ottawa (65%) than in the rest of Ontario (46%) and Canada (39%).
- ▶ The immigrant population grew at three times the rate of the native-born Canadian population and slightly more than twice the overall rate for all groups. More than half (51%) of immigrants belonged to the economic category.
- ▶ Between 1991 and 2001, 34,375 immigrants settled in Ottawa, representing 83.6% of net growth in the working population. By 2017, immigrants will represent 27% of the population of Ottawa, and visible minorities will represent 28%.

Source: http://www.city.ottawa.on.ca/city_services/statistics/immigration/growing_en.html

CPIFO, Ottawa's French-language Coalition Against Homelessness, chose to devote its 4th annual forum to the situation of French-speaking racial and ethnocultural minorities (FREM) because the housing challenges they face are reaching alarming proportions.

According to the 2006 census, 34% of all Francophones in Ontario – one out of three French-speaking Ontarians – are tenants who live below the *low income cut-offs (LICOs). This percentage is 35% in Toronto, which is slightly above the provincial average, and 38% in Ottawa. In other words, nearly two of every five French-speaking tenants residing in the nation's capital live below the LICOs.

According to Statistics Canada, the economic situation of immigrants, who arrived before 2001 and between 2001 and 2006, is also more troubling in Ottawa than in Toronto, or elsewhere in the province: 46% of French-speaking immigrants who arrived before 2001 are tenants living below the LICOs. As the graph indicates, that figure rises to 61% for French-speaking immigrants who arrived between 2001 and 2006. The figures are higher than those for Toronto (34% and 48% respectively) and the rest of the province (38% and 52%).

The annual forum, which was sponsored by the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI), the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the City of Ottawa and Rogers Community Television, brought together, in the fall of 2009, some 100 stakeholders representing various sectors of activity. Participants cast a critical eye on the situation of families, the elderly, abused women and youth from FREM, and unanimously agreed that it was high time to sound the alarm on all sides. An alarm had previously sounded several months earlier in the Ottawa-Gatineau region when a Radio-Canada news report revealed that nearly 12,000 families were on the waiting list for subsidized housing units, where they could expect to wait up to eight years.

** Canada has no official poverty line, but Statistics Canada calculates a low income cut-off based on pre-tax income including transfers.*

As forum participants learned, housing is one of the biggest challenges facing immigrants, in fact the third most important after employment and job training.

Immigrant families, which are often large, must overcome a series of obstacles to find affordable, decent housing. In Ottawa for example, existing social housing units are sometimes too small and in disrepair. It is estimated that 335 million dollars would have to be invested to restore them to proper condition. Also, newcomers often don't know their rights and responsibilities, nor do they know whom to turn to for help with housing, and end up being victims of discrimination.

Forums like the one held by Ottawa's French-language Coalition are an effective way not only to break the silence around major social issues pertaining to Francophone immigration, such as homelessness, the housing crisis and discrimination, but also to encourage community members to band together in the search for solutions.

Food for thought

EXOGAMOUS FAMILIES

Exogamy, or a union between two individuals with different first languages and cultures, is a growing phenomenon in Canada's French-speaking minority communities. According to a report by the Commission Nationale des Parents Francophones, the proportion of children in exogamous families is higher (61%) among preschool-age children than among 5- to 17-year-olds (54.7%). Many stakeholders working in Ontario on French-language programming for young children are finding it difficult «to please everyone» and offer truly Francophone programs.

Source : <http://www.leblocnotes.ca/node/2527>

Action Research:

Adaptability of French-language Services for Abused Immigrant Women from Racial and Ethnocultural Minorities

A research report published in 2009 is an eye-opener not only about violence against women, but also about the need to provide French-language services that are responsive to victims' needs, specifically abused women from French-speaking racial and ethnocultural minorities (FREM).

MOFIF, the Ontario movement representing French-speaking immigrant women, received a grant from Canadian Heritage to conduct action research. While not as comprehensive as it could be given more resources, the research does shed new light on four key aspects. The report on the adaptability of French-language services for abused women from French-speaking racial and ethnocultural minorities provides the following:

- ▶ an analysis of the unique characteristics of the FREM community in terms of domestic violence against women for the purpose of encouraging stakeholders to make existing services more responsive to the realities and needs of these clients;
- ▶ a range of approaches and models designed to make it easier to provide culturally appropriate French-language services to abused women within the FREM community;
- ▶ the views of women belonging to FREM, who have used available services in an effort to curb violence against women, as well as the views of workers who come to the aid of abused women;
- ▶ an overview of service gaps, available resources and requirements in terms of French-language services in support of abused women from French-speaking racial and ethnocultural minorities.

The report's authors explain that the research work done to date is not the end of a process. Rather the report is the first step in encouraging an ongoing, in-depth look at a serious issue. The hope is that it will kick-start a collective effort to address the specific needs of abused French-speaking immigrant women through culturally appropriate services. MOFIF Coordinator Viviane Koné says: «This is a huge challenge. Our organization is currently focusing on raising awareness among all social stakeholders, so that we can then marshal our forces and resources to address this critical issue.»

Survey respondents – 13 women belonging to MREF and 15 workers – were consulted anonymously using an interview guide and a questionnaire. Although the sample size is too small to draw any general conclusions, the data collected nonetheless offer important new clues.

Did you know...

According to the *Federal Employment Equity Act* (1986), racial (visible) minorities are persons (other than Aboriginal persons) who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour. Since 1996, racial minority data are drawn from responses to a question on population groups. The following groups are included in the variable: Chinese, South Asian (e.g. East Indian, Pakistani, Punjabi, Sri Lankan), Black (e.g. African, Haitian, Jamaican, Somali), Arab/West Asian (e.g. Armenian, Egyptian, Iranian, Lebanese, Moroccan), Filipino, South East Asian (e.g. Cambodian, Indonesian, Laotian, Vietnamese), Latin American, Japanese, Korean and others (Form 2B variable). The Francophone racial minority population is estimated using the Racial Minority variable in combination with the *French First Official Language Spoken* variable, rather than French Mother Tongue.

Source: www.ofa.gov.on.ca/fr/franco-stats-2005/minorities.html



Key Findings (Report Excerpt)

- ▶ In the context of the cultural pluralism that now characterizes Canadian society, we must provide adequate cultural support services in order to ensure equal access for a culturally diverse population. A feminist perspective is considered an essential foundation when working with women. More must be done to help immigrant and refugee women. It is crucial that we strengthen the feminist perspective by adding a component of cultural dimension / responsiveness to the services currently being provided.
- ▶ On the one hand, immigrant and refugee women claim they are satisfied with the services they have received. On the other hand, they see gaps when accessing services. Their level of

satisfaction indicates that interventions and the support they have received did meet their immediate, basic needs (transportation, support, housing, temporary relief, etc.), but their long-term needs (social, economic and political integration) have not been met.

- ▶ While there has been progress in the area of domestic violence, support and social services still lack promotion and prevention programs to meet the particular needs of this population.

Recommendations

In its recommendations, the MOFIF report emphasizes the importance of sharing the results of its action research with community organizations across the province working to curb domestic violence. Another recommendation addresses the need to better document the experiences of immigrant and refugee women, so that intervention tools can be tailored to fit their particular situation and needs. Furthermore, the report stresses the need to offer workers more training and to develop a strategy designed to increase the visibility of French-language services within the FREM community.

The research report is available in French at: <http://www.mofif.ca/accomplis.htm>.

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The six streams

of the Settlement Program are:

- 1 Needs Assessment and Referrals
- 2 Information and Awareness Services
- 3 Language Learning and Skills Development
- 4 Employment-Related services
- 5 Community Connections
- 6 Support services

All services that were previously eligible for funding under LINC, ISAP, and Host remain eligible under the Settlement Program, but they are instead described by expected result and stream(s).

The results targeted by these streams are orientation, language/skills, labour market access, welcoming communities, and policy and program development.

- ▶ **Orientation** seeks mainly to give prospective immigrants and newcomers access to accurate, appropriate, useful information about their settlement in Canada.
- ▶ **Language skills and other aptitudes** are designed to develop the skills newcomers need in order to function in Canadian society.
- ▶ **Participation in the labour market** includes assistance to newcomers in finding and keeping a job, and assistance to employers to recruit newcomers and build loyalty to their place of work.

- ▶ **Good host communities** recognize the importance of community involvement, which is an integral part of the integration process.

- ▶ **Program and policy development** seeks to develop capacity and encourage exchange of good practices within the settlement community.

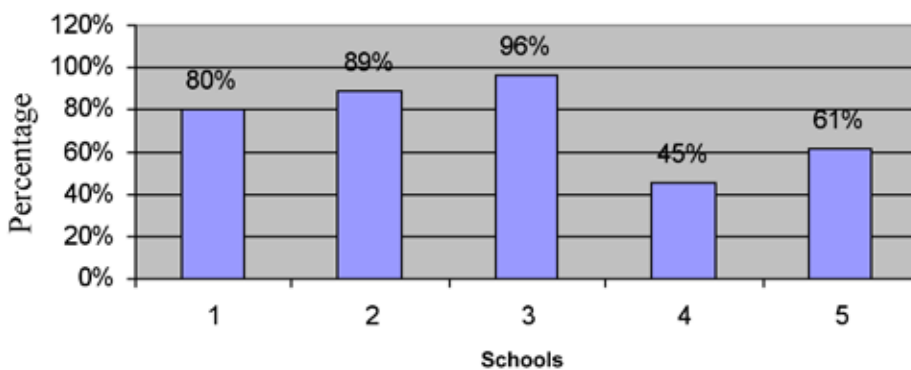
The new approach to activities and programs leads to better results for newcomers and for persons whose settlement needs are increasingly complex. During the year, service provider organizations working to adapt to the changes resulting from the modernized approach will receive more detailed information on the changeover to the new Settlement Program.

Innovative School-based Program for Ethnocultural Youth: Linking Parents, Schools and Government Through Partnership

"Today, immigration in Canada has a far-reaching impact on the country's population growth. It was responsible for two-thirds of our population growth in the intercensal period of 2001 and 2006. Due to the settlement pattern of the foreign-born in the recent decades, the effect of immigration is mostly felt in Canada's largest urban centres and their surrounding municipalities."

This is how Statistics Canada describes the situation based on the results of the 2006 census. It is not surprising, therefore, to learn that immigration has substantial repercussions on urban elementary and secondary schools. In some Ottawa schools, the percentage of students from visible minorities is very high. As shown in the graph, five elementary and high schools governed by CEPEO, the French-language public school board of Eastern Ontario, are prime examples of this phenomenon.

**Percentage of Students from Visible Minorities in
Certain CEPEO Schools (2004)**



1. Charlotte-Lemieux public elementary school
2. Gabrielle-Roy public elementary school
3. Marie-Curie public elementary school
4. Le Trillium public elementary school
5. Deslauriers public secondary school

Diversity offers many advantages, but it can also create challenges. In urban areas, families, schools, communities and every level of government are increasingly concerned about youth violence, dropouts and delinquency. Youth from racial and ethnocultural minority communities are not exempt from these sweeping social problems.

Three times weekly, after class until the dinner hour, students participate in a homework club and organized activities. Dialogue is a major focus—students engage in group discussions on a range of topics such as drugs, street gangs and cyber terrorism. Transportation for the 80-some students who participate in the program is free.

This is why the French-speaking ethnocultural parent group REPFO has joined forces with CEPEO and two of its schools. Their goal: to help at-risk kids by curbing youth violence and criminal activity through positive community programming. Their solution: *Le Relais*, a promising program funded by Public Safety Canada's Crime Prevention Action Fund (CPAF). This innovative three-year program draws on knowledge to reduce youth crime by acting on the risk factors that lead children into trouble.

The program is implemented and run in partnership with REPFO, which coordinates some of the activities. The non-profit organization, founded in 1998, advocates on behalf of French-speaking parents from racial and ethnocultural minorities. Its mission is to help youth and the community by acting on the various factors that can lead them down the wrong path.

«Helping youth in an effective manner means working with various stakeholders, in cooperation with parents, schools and community organizations. We see the youth-based activities of *Le Relais* as an investment in a foundation built on excellence and hope,» explains REPFO's Executive Director Farhan Hassan.

Le Relais is implemented in communities with a high proportion of students from visible minorities. It offers alternative solutions by keeping youth engaged and away from crime elements, thereby maximizing their chances of succeeding in school. More specifically, the program provides assistance to at-risk visible minority and ethnocultural students through recreational and preventive activities.



The Crime Prevention Action Fund views *Le Relais* as a possible model program which could be implemented on a national scale. As a result, it will be subjected to an in-depth external assessment. Eventually, *Le Relais* could be exported to other schools and communities.

«Where youth are concerned, it is clear to me that schools must be a part of the solution. Through our schools, we have to open up the whole school system to the community. Schools must be living, breathing entities that are open and

welcoming throughout the summer, after school hours, in the evening and over the weekend. Our youth need to have a safe place where they can freely and creatively express themselves, grow and flourish through positive actions,»

adds Jean-François Picher,
CEPEO Program Coordinator.

The French-language public school board intends to implement *Le Relais* in other forms (by adding sports, artistic, scientific and other components) throughout its schools.

Sources :

<http://www.census2006.com/census-recensement/2006/as-sa/97-557/index-eng.cfm>

Overview of *Le Relais* and graph supplied by CEPEO, the French Language Public School Board of Eastern Ontario
www.repfo.ca

Report on the Diversity of the Francophone Community

The diversity of Ontario's Francophone community is the salient point in a new statistical report by the Government of Ontario and the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF).

The report describes the key economic, social and demographic trends at play within Ontario's Francophone population. It reveals that 22% of all French-speaking immigrants in Ontario arrived between 2001 and 2006, and that 10% of Francophones identify themselves as members of a visible minority.

Some 14% of Francophones were born abroad.

Ontario is home to nearly 600,000 French-speaking residents, the largest community in Canada outside of Québec. Some 14% of Francophones were born abroad. Three out of five Francophones were born in Ontario, and one out of five was born in Québec.

Source: Office of Francophone Affairs ontario.ca/francophones

SUMMARY

- This joint publication is the first to use the new inclusive definition of Francophone, adopted by the Government of Ontario in June 2009.
- Ontario's 582,695 Francophones are concentrated mainly in the East and North East Regions, although a substantial number also live in the Central Region.
- The majority of Francophones in Ontario speak French at home (55%), and two-thirds of them use French at work.

LEARN MORE

- Access the complete report at:
<http://www.ontario.ca/en/communities/francophones/profile/index.htm>



Economy - Jobs - Recognition

A Welcoming Class Unlike Any Other in Ontario

In 1995, CSDCCS (*Conseil scolaire de district catholique Centre-Sud*), the French-language catholic school board serving Central and Southern Ontario, established a welcoming class for landed immigrant students at Sacré-Cœur Catholic Elementary School in Toronto. Unlike any other in Ontario, this class brings together a maximum of 12 children from grades 1 through 6 for the express purpose of facilitating their entry into the Ontario school system and their integration into regular classes.

When it first started, the class was made up mostly of children born of mixed marriages, i.e., households where English was mostly the home language. Over the past eight years, however, the composition of the welcoming class has evolved to reflect the changing student body. Now more than 85% of students are French-speaking immigrants who emigrated from Congo, Burundi and Rwanda. Class composition may have changed, but the purpose remains the same: to facilitate the integration of newcomers into school life and regular classes.

According to Jacques Beaudoin, who has taught the class from its inception, «The goal is to equip these students for success. Putting them into regular classes from day one would reduce their chances of success, because they have to adapt in too many ways to too many different things, all at once, like language (pronunciation and vocabulary), food, culture, the environment and many other things».

One of the activities Beaudoin organizes at the start of each school year is to take young newcomers on a walkabout in downtown Toronto to familiarize them with their new surroundings. Some have never seen a sidewalk, much less traffic lights or a telephone; others have never even been in a house with electricity! Once in the host country, these children find themselves in a completely different world, disoriented with no known points of reference upon which to rely. Beaudoin explains that it is difficult for Canadians by birth to understand this culture shock and how it impacts everyday life. For

newcomers, an act as simple as taking the bus represents a huge challenge. Adapting to the Canadian climate is just as hard, if not harder.

Individualized Instruction

A key characteristic of the welcoming class is individualized instruction of French and mathematics. Jacques Beaudoin explains that, when teaching the French language, he follows the calendar year, incorporating the seasons and the various themed Canadian holidays into his teaching plan. «In this way, we help students connect the dots between what happens in everyday life and the origins of the various holidays, Canadian values, what each season brings (e.g. seasonal fruits and vegetables). In fact, every subject becomes a medium for improving and facilitating integration.» What is also important is enriching the vocabulary of immigrant children with Canadian words and expressions. They need to learn these new words and expressions, to recognize them, understand their meaning, and use them in the proper context. Pronunciation is another essential aspect covered in class. Some letters of the alphabet are pronounced differently. As students explore a new language, they also learn to speak French in order to be understood and to understand what others are saying, all part of learning to communicate effectively.

Clear Advantage

Having a small number of students in the class (12 max.) is clearly advantageous. This allows newcomers to be initiated into Canadian life and the school environment in a much less intimidating setting where they can share their experience with others in a similar situation. In a small classroom setting, each student receives individualized attention proportionate to his or her unique needs. Students advance at their own pace, gaining greater self-confidence in the process. If they were placed in regular classes, these students would not receive the kind of individual support they need, nor would they develop as quickly. In all likelihood, this would put them on the path to failure, which would inevitably lead them to drop out.

It is very difficult for new students who have recently arrived from another continent or another environment to acquire basic knowledge and skills in a context that has no meaning for them. The first principle of good teaching is based on the fact that learning must be meaningful, and in order for it to be meaningful, it must start with what the learner knows.

Partnerships

According to the old saying, it takes a village to raise a child. And according to Jacques Beaudoin, this applies equally well to helping a child integrate into a new country. «We work together with other community service providers to support immigrant students and their families.» The *Centre Francophone de Toronto*, for example, offers a host program for newcomers that provides valuable support in key areas such as housing, employment, legal aid and securing official documentation (e.g. health cards, driver's license and passports). When it comes to helping newcomers integrate, Sacré-Cœur Catholic Elementary School relies not only on its own support mechanisms and resources, but also on those of the host community. The whole infrastructure is called on to help.

High Success Rates

Time spent in the welcoming class never extends beyond two years. Generally, students spend one year there, but this varies according to individual needs and the integration challenges each one faces. Once students are ready, they begin going to regular classes, where they achieve high success rates. According to Jacques Beaudoin, the

most important thing «is to make them want to strive to get ahead. By motivating them, we give them a taste for success. What we're actually doing is giving them all the tools they need to learn and become fully engaged Canadian citizens.»

This pioneering teacher admits that he is more than a little proud when former students come back to see him to talk about their plans for the future. Many go on to pursue post-secondary studies. One of Beaudoin's former pupils has even followed in his footsteps. He now teaches grade 12 mathematics, in Toronto,

at Monseigneur de Charbonnel Catholic Secondary School.

The class is funded by two grants from the Ontario government under the French as a Second Language (FSL) and French Literacy Development (FLD) programs.

French-speaking Racial and Ethnocultural Minorities (FREM) Inclusion and Participation in the 2010 Municipal Elections

In partnership with REPFO, a provincial advocate for French-speaking ethnocultural parents, AFMO, the French-language association representing Ontario municipalities, has launched an awareness-raising and civic education program for the benefit of FREM. The objective is to involve members of FREM in Ontario's 2010 municipal and school board elections. The program, funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation, is part of an initiative being developed to promote the full integration of immigrants in the fundamental exercise of their democratic and civic rights in Ontario.

2010 Schedule of Information and Training Sessions		
Cities and Locations	Information Sessions	Training Sessions
Ottawa : YM/YWCA	March 26, 2010	April 9 and 10, 2010
Toronto : La Passerelle	April 23, 2010	May 14 and 15, 2010
London/Hamilton : location TBA	May 28, 2010	June 4 and 5, 2010
Sudbury : location TBA	September 10, 2010	September 24 and 25, 2010

2006: First Awareness-Raising Efforts

The initiative was first conceived in 2006, when REPFO and AFMO joined forces to conduct a province-wide pilot project. Their goal was to tell the MREF population of the upcoming municipal and school board elections to be held across Ontario that year. Information sessions funded by the Trillium Foundation of Ontario were held in Ottawa with more than 650 participants in attendance.

Participants also filled out a survey. Observations and comments collected from participants and candidates revealed that some of them experienced great difficulty in preparing to participate in the elections. Their difficulties could be mainly attributed to a lack of information about the electoral system as a whole, both for school board and municipal elections. Among major obstacles, survey respondents cited the lack of understanding of the Canadian electoral system, the lack of experience in exercising fundamental and civic rights, and the lack of knowledge of the laws, including citizen obligations and responsibilities.

This sparked the idea of launching a second project to identify barriers preventing FREM from participating in the democratic electoral process.

Information and Training

Through information and training sessions to be held in the four target cities of Ottawa, Toronto, London/Hamilton and Sudbury, participating members of FREM and other interested French-speaking citizens will gain a better understanding of what is at stake with respect to local government and schools in their community. People wanting to get involved as candidates or as volunteers can sign up for an intensive two-day training course, which explores political life and the community resources available to them.

Partners and Sponsors

The partners of this joint AFMO/REPFO initiative include the Ottawa YM/YWCA, Toronto's La Passerelle, Contact Interculturel Francophone de Sudbury and London's Regroupement Multiculturel Francophone.

The provincial initiative was born out of the collaboration and funding support of the Ontario Trillium Foundation, which recognizes the importance of FREM and their contribution to Ontario's francophonie, a minority language community that must ensure its survival through immigration.



Welcome with a Capital « W »

CSDCSO, the French-language public school board serving Central and Southwestern Ontario, has but one *raison d'être*: its students. From Windsor to Penetanguishene to Toronto and the Niagara peninsula, nearly 8,000 students attend one of CSDCSO's 38 schools. Its student population comprises more than 50 ethnic origins and comes from a variety of households, often exogamous families where only one partner has French as a mother tongue. Not surprisingly, school is the place where the families of these thousands of students first begin to develop a sense of belonging and form ties with the community. For many, school is the starting point, the gateway to the region's Francophone community, the place where they will put down roots.

For this reason, CSDCSO through its schools is always looking for innovative new ways of engaging families in school life. The goal is to encourage them to become contributing citizens active in making the Francophone community and its institutions ever more vibrant and healthy.

Launch of an Innovative Project

In 2007, CSDCSO received funding from the provincial and federal governments, through the Canada-Ontario Agreement, to set up the Welcome – Parent – Engagement project.

The goal of the three-year project was to get parents and caregivers on board as active participants in their children's education. In year one, a community agent was hired to develop an intervention model suitable for families new to Ontario as a means of helping them integrate into Francophone life.

In light of regional requirements and inspired by projects implemented in other regions, the agent mapped out an action plan based on an in-depth understanding of the needs

of newcomers. And, since the primary purpose of a school is to teach, the agent's recommended approach is one that was required to fit with Ontario's school curriculum. As a result, the ideas outlined in the plan are tied to current literacy and numeracy programs, but nonetheless still provide children and their families the opportunity to familiarize themselves with their new surroundings and everyday life in Canada.

The Welcome – Parent – Engagement project was rolled out in year two. Parents were invited to get more involved in their children's education, particularly from kindergarten through grade 4. Five elementary schools with a high percentage of immigrant students participated in the project: Gabrielle-Roy in Toronto, Pavillon de la Jeunesse in Hamilton, Carrefour des Jeunes in Brampton, Horizon Jeunesse in Mississauga and Lafontaine in Kleinburg.

Tailored Tools and Activities

A community learning agent was tasked with visiting the schools and working with them on developing educational tools and activities specially designed to bring together teachers, students and their families. That is how they came up with the idea of doing a series of workshops where students would write their history in a giant book, which would then be shared with all classmates and their families. This gave students a chance to tell their story in their own words and to talk about their native country. The book, a symbol of learning, turned out to be a great idea because the activity taught students how to build effective narrative and about interview techniques.

Throughout the creative process, which took place in phase three of the project, parents and caregivers were called on to contribute.

They taught their children about the unique characteristics of their culture and helped them along as they learned to read, write and speak. The community learning agent also held workshops with teachers on how best to support parents and caregivers in teaching literacy to their children.

Facilitating Integration

At a special event, teachers and families gathered to see students unveil the giant book and to hear their stories, an exercise that allowed them to strengthen their verbal skills. The event offered families an opportunity to mingle, to become further engaged in school life, and to improve their ties to the Francophone community.

CSDCSO will continue to encourage immigrant families to participate in their children's education by providing concrete tools and support. For example, an information and training kit is currently under development. Written in plain language, the kit teaches families about key aspects of Canadian life, including the Ontario school system. Some 26 information workshops will be offered based on population needs.

CSDCSO believes that it takes a community of committed citizens to make schools and their communities healthy, vibrant places in which all children can flourish. That is why the school board enthusiastically welcomes new ideas promoting greater school involvement.

To learn more, visit www.csdcsso.on.ca.



French-language Schools: Powerful Tools in the Settlement and Integration Process

People come to Canada in search of a better life, a brighter future. Sometimes they arrive alone and have no one upon whom to rely. There is but one certainty for all immigrants who set foot in their host country: they are completely lost. Where to start? Who to turn to? What to do?

Schools are often among the first institutions to come into contact with newcomers upon their arrival. They naturally play an important role in helping new families settle and integrate into their host community. Each year, St-Edmond Catholic Elementary School welcomes new immigrant students and their families. Sometimes, it's six Congolese families, at other times, a dozen newcomers from Burundi or Rwanda, or a group of Haitians. Located in the western part of the city of Windsor, St-Edmond is at the heart of a greatly diverse population. The vast majority of its approximately 200 students belong to French-speaking racial and ethnocultural minorities.

This year, St-Edmond is celebrating two major milestones: 100 years of French-language teaching and 30 years of experience and expertise in integrating newcomers into Ontario.

This elementary school has mastered the art and science of helping not only new immigrant students, but also their families in the settlement process, guiding them along as they put down roots. With each new arrival, St-Edmond rolls up its sleeves and takes on a double challenge: one, working to ensure the student will achieve his or her full potential and a sense of well-being in the host community and, two, involving that student's family in school life.

School principal Francine Ringuette is the first to say that it's all about teamwork and the continued support of the French Catholic School Board, which serves Southwestern Ontario.

«St-Edmond thrives on an equal mix of pride and teamwork. The reason our school is so friendly and inviting is because of our teachers and staff; everyone who works here has the children's and their families' best interest at heart. We keep pace with our changing community. People come and go, others stay, and St-Edmond is always here for them.»

Everyone at the school pitches in, starting with Micheline Duguay-Lévesque and Boniface Mukendi, the first to become involved with new immigrant students and their families as service providers under the Newcomer Settlement Program. The close cooperation between staff members makes all the difference in the way educational services and programs are implemented. Great people and the right mix of work processes – regular implementation planning and coordination, continuous



Photos provided by École élémentaire catholique St-Edmond in Windsor

French-language school boards can receive funds for two program components: the first (*FLD) aims to help «recent immigrants» who need language courses. Funding is provided per student based on the number of eligible students who entered Canada for the first time during the current school year or the past four school years.

The second program (*FSL) focuses on the linguistic needs of students who have rights under Section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Funding is calculated by the ministry based on the number of enrolled students in each of the school board's geographical regions, which coincide with the limits of the English-language school district, and an assimilation factor applicable to the region.

Source: <http://tpfr.edu.gov.on.ca/QsandAsPDF%20FR.htm>

improvement, quality assurance in programming and integration, dialogue, ongoing sharing of information and sustained follow-up with immigrant students – all serve to make the St-Edmond formula particularly effective in the area of newcomer settlement and integration.

With the continued support of its school board, St-Edmond has just opened its first multi-age newcomer class to meet the unique and varied needs of immigrant students. «The population both at school and in the community is becoming increasingly diverse. Enriched by the influence of bilingualism, multilingualism and multiculturalism, our school board is now host to a large number of

students from families whose home language is not necessarily French,» adds Janine Griffore, Director of Education.

Programs and services provided by St-Edmond to immigrant students are funded under the Newcomer Settlement Program and French as a Second Language Program. Grants are provided to the school board by the Ontario Ministry of Education.



Good to know

INTEGRATION-NET

Funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), Integration-Net is a tool for communication, information and research to support all settlement workers in Canada. It is also a means for developing an exchange of information and ideas, both nationally and internationally, along with programs for pooling and sharing experiences. The Research Resource Division for Refugees at Carleton University hosts and manages the site. Click on Integration-Net.

PIDEF – Settlement in French-Language Schools Program

This program is intended for families who have recently arrived in Canada with school-age children. Toronto's Centre Francophone offers individual assistance services to students and their parents/guardians to facilitate their adaptation to the school system, i.e. Toronto's two Francophone school boards, and to help families understand the requirements of Ontario's educational system. The Centre also acts as a liaison between students/their parents/guardians and school staff, while also offering group sessions addressing integration in the school setting. The program is funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

Source :

Vers l'intégration : guide pratique à l'intention des écoles et des services à l'enfance de langue française, June 2009, accessible at: http://www.cfcorp.on.ca/cfcorpweb/jeunesse/pdf/Section_7_travailler_ensemble_nouv_arr.pdf

Regionalization

The Latest from the Central Southwestern Network

The dynamism of the Central Southwestern Network was confirmed once again by the successful outcome of its annual forum held on February 24 and 25, in London.

Attended by more than 150 participants representing universities, the community and government, the forum was an opportunity to examine the involvement of the Francophone community and institutional stakeholders in immigration issues, as well as to launch an appeal to all stakeholders to mobilize into action.

The theme of the forum, "Strategizing on resource mobilization in support of a successful Francophone immigration in South-Western Ontario," was well chosen, as it underscored the scope of the challenge and the size of the obstacles to overcome in the region. Issues relating to regionalization, relieving congestion in the Greater Toronto Area, and helping French-speaking immigrants integrate successfully are of concern to both municipal and community stakeholders.

In the area of Francophone immigration, local strategic alliances need to be forged in order to meet the specific needs of communities across the region. These alliances could lead to the creation of partnerships for the purpose of implementing region-specific strategies as a means of ensuring the success of regional immigration programs. Several attempts have been made to find solutions to the challenges of employability and French-language service access across the entire region.

The Network hopes that all community stakeholders will rally around Francophone immigration issues. Everyone has a role to play in providing settlement services and facilitating integration. Influential people and organizations also need to get on board, including municipalities, institutions, companies, government agencies and service providers. By acting together, communities can make great strides in Francophone immigration matters.

The main challenge at this time is setting up immigration committees in all regions of South-Western Ontario. These committees could serve as the Network's primary contacts in identifying challenges at the grassroots level. In an advisory capacity, local committees could provide guidance to organizations on multidisciplinary and multisectorial diversity, and help develop regional action plans.

In March 2010, more than 100 stakeholders participated in the second joint health forum themed "*My Language, My Culture... Keys to My Health*". The event was organized by the *Réseau franco-santé du Sud*, in partnership with the Central Southwestern Network and the *Regroupement des intervenants en santé et en services sociaux de l'Ontario*. Events such as this forum are part of the Network's multi-lateral approach to foster greater involvement in Francophone immigration issues.

In light of the above, the Network hopes to continue organizing workshops in order to bring everyone up to speed and build their capacity. The Network will also help organizations gain access to funding from agencies other than CIC through calls for proposals.

The fiscal year 2010-2011 will be decisive for the Network, which will support different organizations through the various discussion round-tables and immigration committees. In addition, the Network will encourage organizations to establish Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs) with and through municipalities.

Regions whose needs have yet to be assessed, such as Durham, York and Markham, will be visited in the course of the year. Once this is done, needs assessments for the entire South-Western Ontario region will be complete. We will then be in a position to put in place cooperative structures with the help of community and institutional stakeholders across the region. We will no doubt be faced with a number of challenges this year, and we hope to be able to tackle them by relying on the determination of local stakeholders and the support of our partners.



News from the Eastern Network

Created in 2007, the Eastern Network continues to attract new partners to its different local committees. While it evolves constantly to keep pace with the times, the Network remains focused on the priorities and challenges it set out to achieve in the beginning, i.e., promoting Francophone immigration, ensuring that new immigrants are welcomed and informed about French-language services, and helping them find employment that matches their level of skills and experience.

The Immigration Phenomenon

The creation of several Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs) in Eastern Ontario, initiated by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) in partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI), helped bring the issue of regional immigration into sharp focus. In fact, community stakeholders are increasingly aware of the importance of immigration as a means of offsetting such trends as the aging of our population. A large number of projects in support of immigration and settlement have also been implemented for the benefit of newcomers.

Internet portals translated into several languages will soon go online wherever LIPs have been established. These portals will make it possible to group all immigrant services in each of the communities involved. All information, including information about existing French-language services, will be put online for greater ease of access. As an added benefit, this will encourage regionalization by providing greater visibility for regions and allowing people thinking of relocating to the area to access detailed information.

In Kingston, the Network is working to bring back the multicultural festival after a long absence. This event will bring together more than 20 cultural and community groups and showcase the community's growing diversity. Also, the first edition of the Internationally Educated Professionals Conference, slated for

March 2010, is an opportunity for newcomers to showcase their talents and the skill set acquired abroad.

In Ottawa, a LIP has been formed thanks to the coordination efforts of the Catholic Immigration Centre, and others have sprung up in other regions of Ontario. The Ottawa LIP will hold its first public hearings on priority issues. Eastern Network coordinators will attend all meetings. And research conducted in Ottawa has revealed just how important Francophone immigration is for Francophone minority communities. Findings show that, without Francophone immigration, almost 17 French-language schools would have to close down for lack of students.

There is no LIP in Cornwall, but the Eastern Network is currently developing a partnership with various municipalities to increase awareness of the importance of being open to Francophone immigration to the region.

The Eastern Network has also encouraged Hire Immigrants Ottawa to offer workshops to local organizations, providing them with information, tools and support to successfully integrate skilled immigrants into the workforce. These workshops give employers an opportunity to discuss recruitment strategies, share best practices, and make immigration part of the solution to the manpower shortage.

In a similar vein, the Network has formed a partnership that unites CESOC, La Cité collégiale and MBNA Bank. This has already led to the hiring of one skilled immigrant.

In Ottawa, the Eastern Network supported the Franco-Présence cooperative at the launch of its café-bistro. This is a dynamic multicultural environment where culture and the arts are accessible to Francophones by birth, French-speaking immigrants, Francophiles, and anyone wishing to experience *la francophonie's* great diversity.

Cornwall hosted the fourth edition of the Network's annual forum under the theme "From welcoming to growing together." Organizationally speaking, the event was a success. Participants took part in workshops, where they discussed the factors of successful immigration. Recommendations flowing from this forum are viewed by the Network as an opportunity to explore issues in greater depth and to continue forging ahead by implementing activities in support of the objectives underlying the Strategic Plan of CIC.



The Francophone Community of Timmins: Celebrating Diversity and Immigration

February 5, 2010 will be remembered by Timmins' *francophonie* as the first time in the community's history that it marked Black History Month by celebrating the heritage, culture and contributions of African-Canadians. Through the actions and words of its organizations and institutions, the community demonstrated its openness to others and the high value it places on cultural diversity. From all indications, the community is deeply vested in attracting, retaining and integrating French-speaking immigrants in Northern Ontario.

The celebrations were part of activities organized by the Francophone Immigration Support Network for Northern Ontario, with support from Contact Interculturel Francophone de Sudbury (CIFS), Alliance de la Francophonie de Timmins, several other community organizations and education institutions.

Awareness-raising activities were held at École Catholique Louis-Rhéaume in Timmins to promote diversity and multiculturalism. The highly enthusiastic crowd of students listened to instructive tales, played educational games, and had fun with the traditional African musical instruments. The entire school was involved including the teaching and support staff.

Members of the general public also joined the festivities at the La Ronde Cultural Centre. The goal was to raise awareness of cultural diversity in the host community and to foster ties between newcomers and French-speaking Canadians by birth. The cultural event drew a full house of nearly 200 spectators. In a show of solidarity with the Haitian people, the crowd observed a moment of silence in memory of earthquake victims. The CIFS also did some fundraising onsite in support of Canadian Red Cross efforts.

Awareness-raising activities were designed to foster a better understanding of and closer ties between French-speaking communities both in Canada and abroad. Such activities help to reduce feelings of isolation, social

and economic exclusion, discrimination and stereotyping. They encourage French-speaking immigrant children, youth and adults, and entire ethnic communities, to develop a stronger sense of belonging to the host community and to flourish. As a result, the Francophone community of Timmins is now far better equipped to welcome, include and integrate newcomers.

Other Recent Highlights

In September 2009, an information booth was set up at Boréal College to welcome newcomers on campus.

Immigrant students received additional information about settlement and integration services available in the region. A majority of them also signed up as members of the CIFS, the only service provider to French-speaking immigrants in the greater Sudbury region. As members, they can participate in a variety of French-language community activities and stay connected to the Francophone community, as well as access a range of social and economic integration services.

The African Cabaret held its annual event in November 2009, which featured a varied program of cultural and artistic entertainment. A crowd of over 400 people from different origins and backgrounds showed up to network, make new contacts, and gain a better intercultural understanding of the community. French-speaking Canadians by birth and newcomers alike were amazed by the rich artistic, musical, folkloric and culinary diversity of the African Cabaret. This type of social encounter has proven effective at breaking down barriers and facilitating social, economic and cultural integration.

Did you know...

French-speaking Racial and Ethnocultural Minorities (FREM)

According to the Federal Employment Equity Act (1986), racial (visible) minorities are persons (other than Aboriginal persons) who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour. Since 1996, racial minority data are drawn from responses to a question on population groups. The following groups are included in the variable: Chinese, South Asian (e.g. East Indian, Pakistani, Punjabi, Sri Lankan), Black (e.g. African, Haitian, Jamaican, Somali), Arab/West Asian (e.g. Armenian, Egyptian, Iranian, Lebanese, Moroccan), Filipino, South East Asian (e.g. Cambodian, Indonesian, Laotian, Vietnamese), Latin American, Japanese, Korean and others (Form 2B variable).

The Francophone racial minority population is estimated using the Racial Minority variable in combination with the *French First Official Language Spoken* variable, rather than *French Mother Tongue*.

Source: <http://www.ofa.gov.on.ca/en/franco-stats-2005minorities.html>

Testimonials from a family that emigrated from Morocco to Hamilton

Aziz Douo, father, Majida Belahcen, mother, and their two daughters: Zaynab Douo, born in Morocco, and Maryam Douo, born in Hamilton in 2009

Aziz Douo writes:

"After receiving our visa to immigrate to Canada, we took the plane from Casablanca/Morocco to Montreal, where we spent a week with friends. During our brief stay, we made the decision to move to Toronto.

When we arrived in Ontario's capital city, we had no contacts, so we got a room in a downtown hotel. The next day, we took the subway to go to Victoria Park and look for housing there, but unfortunately we didn't find anything. The morning after that, we left the hotel to go to the station, where an employee advised us to go to Hamilton instead. We considered her suggestion very carefully. She was so nice that she even offered to let us leave our luggage at the station's baggage check for free.

We took the bus to Hamilton without knowing where we were going or who would

take us in. When we arrived, just when we were wondering where to turn, the guardian angels of travellers appeared once again. We asked a lady where we might find an affordable place to stay, and she pointed us toward «Access Housing.»

Once there, we met a couple. After a long discussion, they decided to help us find a shelter, which unfortunately was full to capacity. An employee informed us that she was required to separate us, meaning that my wife and daughter would stay with the women, while I had to go to the men's side. Since such a situation was completely new for us, we hesitated to stay there. The couple, who quickly noticed our reluctance, invited us to their house. We spent a week in their home and, thanks to them, we were able to find housing and get the necessary documents, such as our health and social security cards.

That was how we got settled in Hamilton. Since Majida had been an English teacher at home and had a good mastery of the language, Toronto was our original choice, but destiny decided otherwise.

Unaware there were French-language services in Hamilton, we approached the English-speaking organization «SISO» for help in finding work. We were put through English assessment tests, after which I was referred to the LINC course at St-Charles School, while our little girl was in an Anglophone day-care centre attached to the CLIC program. Majida, who didn't need the LINC courses, was referred to the ELT program at Mohawk College to get comfortable with the Canadian accent."

Majida writes:

"One day, when I stopped back in at SISO, the secretary found out that I speak French and asked me if I had asked for help at the French-language College yet. That was a big surprise for us, since we didn't know such a college existed.

At Collège Boréal, I was welcomed by the receptionist, who directed me to the program coordinator. He explained what programs were offered there and which of them could be helpful to us. I even learned that my husband could transfer from St-Charles to Collège Boréal, which was excellent news for us because we speak French and it would make our lives easier. Honestly, I really appreciated their warmth. They were understanding and open to all of my questions.

My husband and I talked about this wonderful opportunity and decided to schedule a meeting and enrol right away. So after I registered

for the Destination Profession program, we met the LINC coordinator who enrolled Aziz in her program. When we mentioned our two-year-old daughter, Zaynab, she reassured us that Collège Boréal would take care of her in day-care. She also took charge of Aziz' transportation for his CLIC courses. We were very happy to have our daughter start her preschool in French. It changed the course of our lives.

In the midst of all this, a surprise awaited us – I found out I was pregnant. I felt a whole range of emotions! I was worried about our financial situation, stressed by our new lifestyle, uncertain because I was unfamiliar with the environment and the system. Still, the joy of knowing that our little family was about to grow and that our children would have a better education calmed my fears.

During the Destination Profession program, the staff and faculty at Collège Boréal wor

ked tirelessly to help me overcome the discomforts of pregnancy and encouraged me to continue with my classes and stay the course, not to mention my classmates who were very supportive. At Collège Boréal, we felt at home. Everything became easy and our hope of achieving success was restored.

The fifteen weeks of the Destination Profession program went very well thanks to the dedication of the organizers and the professionalism of the instructors. The program helped me to improve my professional skills and also gave me an opportunity to learn to adapt to the various cultures that make up the community.

Incidentally, I discovered a new reality in Canada. I have the option of changing careers and learning a new profession that will facilitate my stability and my integration into society. I also took a two-day course on calculating income and taxes through

a Collège Boréal initiative in cooperation with the Canada Revenue Agency. It was an opportunity to learn how important transparency is in paying taxes as well as the value of the right to an accurately calculated income. This attests to the efforts made by

Collège Boréal to help newcomers adapt more effectively to their new community, participate in the country's development and enjoy their most fundamental rights."

Aziz Douo writes::

"After two months in the CLIC program, I was assessed and moved up to level 3. This progress encouraged me to enrol in the ACE program, which will help me to obtain the equivalent of a secondary school diploma in Ontario. I very much appreciate the help of my professors and the CLIC coordinator, who is

always striving to improve learning conditions. As a student at Collège Boréal, I feel as though I am with family.

Since our daughter Zaynab began attending «Le Petit Navire» day-care centre, she has learned many words in French. She has also learned to become independent. At thirty months, she is

able to put on her shoes and coat and to wash her hands. She loves her teachers. All of this has made us happier and more stable. When the day-care service opens at Collège Boréal in March 2010, my CLIC/LINC courses will be in the same building as my daughter's day-care, and things will be even easier for me."

